1:Srinivas E-5 (1940-42)1952 AW5 Coorg AW5

mortar, with solid, carved woodwork. Masons and carpenters from Malabar build them, and Coorg ancestral houses consequently resemble greatly the houses of well-to-do Nāyars. The house is usually situated on an elevation, and a narrow, high-walled and winding lane (*ōṇi*) leads up to it. From the windows in the upper story one usually obtains a fine view of the surrounding country. Formerly, in the days when feuds, or *kuḍupi* (*kuḍippaka* in Malayāḷam), between joint families were common, and a surprise raid (*kaḷḷa paḍé*) from a hostile *okka* was always a possibility, anyone coming with unfriendly intentions exposed himself to view from the windows of the ancestral house. The house was built like a fortress and was able to stand a siege for several days.

The ancestral estate usually includes an extent of jungle, some grazing land, and valleys in which rice is grown. The jungle provided the household with the necessary timber and fuel. A part of the jungle is reserved for burying or cremating the dead members of the *okka*. There is a kitchen-garden near the main building. A well or pond provides water for domestic purposes.

Every house includes an ancestor-shrine or ancestor-platform. Uncarved stones, representing cobra-deities, are planted on platforms built around the trunk of a milk-exuding tree. There may also be other uncarved stones representing minor deities like Pūda and Guḷika.

According to Lewis Rice,[1] in the seventies of the last century the Coorg *okka* frequently consisted of twenty or thirty, and occasionally even fifty members, all residing under one roof. He further tells us that previous to the invasion of Coorg by Tippu Sultan in the latter half of the eighteenth century, it was not uncommon to find in a house thirty or forty adult male relatives living together. Many *okkas* seem to have had 120 to 150 people, all living in the ancestral house.

Nowadays the *okka* commonly consists of two or three generations of agnatically-related males, their wives, and their children. Girls born in the *okka* go out on marriage as residence is patrilocal, but it sometimes happens that a woman remains unmarried for a variety of reasons. In such a case she stays in her natal *okka*. An *okka* also includes the widow of a deceased member. As mentioned earlier, leviratic unions are preferred amongst Coorgs, and a widow

[1] *Mysore and Coorg*, Bangalore, 1878, vol. iii, p. 329.

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A View of Talai Cauvery

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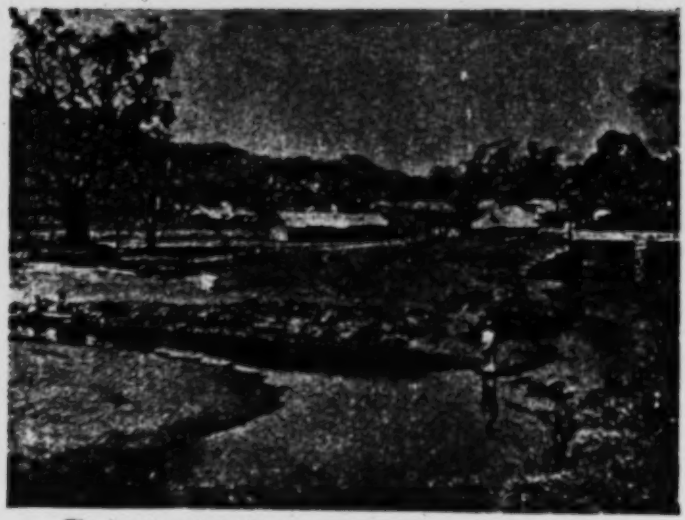

The junction of the Kanaka and the Cauvery at Bahamandala

[facing p. 2]

3:Iyer E-5 (no date) 1948 AW5 Coorg AW5

ed a passage to the immigrants from Malabar. From the above facts, it may be gathered that they were not an unmixed race. The house names of some of the Coorg families indicate Mysore, Tulus or Tamil origin. Their language, demon and ancestor-worship do tend to show that they belong to the Dravidian. Their traits are biologically useful and related to mental capacity and intellectual endowment. Their mountain habitat, climate, food and occupation are responsible for what they are at present, and these factors have differentiated them from the people of the plains. 174

Habitation

The Coorg houses are like those of the Nayars of Kerala. They are situated by the side of their paddy fields on a sheltering slope of Bane-land, surrounded by plantain trees, bastard sago, orange, jack and guava trees. A coffee garden and a small plot of land for the growth of vegetables are not absent on the Hittelmandala land. There is a small pond well stocked with fish. The position and type of building bear an analogy to those of the Nayars of Kerala. The approaches to the Coorg house strongly mark the design of fortification, and tradition goes back to a time of general feuds, when chief fought against chief and clan with clan. Deep trenches with high embankments are visible memorials to the warlike state of affairs in days gone by. These trenches intersect the mountainous district in every direction. 351 342 [171] [137] [245] [712]

A deeply cut passage paved with rough stones and overgrown with shady trees, its sloping side walls decked with a variety of ferns, leads one in angular lines to a doorway passing under an outhouse. Houses are located in the midst of their plantations remote from the public gaze. A paved courtyard is surrounded by stables, store rooms, and servants' quarters, in front of which is the main quadrangular building which has one storey and is raised about three feet from the ground. All the buildings are roofed with bamboo and thatched with rice straw which is annually repaired and renewed. There is an open square hall in the centre known as batte or nundumane, the four sides of which are provided with rooms for the inmates to occupy. In front of the building there is an open verandah which is the reception hall. It is raised and covered with a wooden plank almirah two or three feet broad, so as to form convenient seats for the male members and visitors. From it rise three or four wooden pillars square, round and tapering, and sometimes carved. The floor is well beaten with mud and cleaned with cowdung. The ceiling is of wood, arranged in small compartments. In some, the verandah is separated from the inner hall by a wall with a sort of window or lattice made of wood. It is a contrivance intended for the benefit of the Coorg women who are curious to see visitors. On the right side of the verandah there is a main [824] [356] 342 [237]

4: Richter M, G-5 (ca. 1856-1870) 1870 AW5 Coorg AW5

3. SOCIAL LIFE OF THE COORGS.

a. The Coorg house.

342 361 [241] The Coorg houses are generally situated close to their paddy-fields on a sheltering slope of Báne land, surrounded by clumps of plantain trees, sago and betel-nut palms and [231] other fruit-bearing trees. A coffee garden and a small plot for the growth of native vegetables are seldom absent, and, where the locality is favourable, a little tank well stocked with 361 fish is not uncommon. The position, the style of building 712 and the approaches of old Coorg houses strongly remind one [342 173] of small fortifications, and tradition points back to a time of general feuds, when chief fought with chief, clan with clan. In the deep cadangas or ditches with high banks, we still see [726] memorials of that warlike state of affairs. These war-ditches intersect the mountainous districts in every direction, and resisted not only many a furious attack of contending parties, but also the force of the annual monsoon.

351 342 A deeply cut passage, paved with rough stones and overgrown with shady trees, and the sloping side walls decked with a variety of luxuriant ferns, leads you in angular lines to the doorway, passing under an out-house. Over a paved courtyard, on three sides enclosed by stables, store-rooms and servants' quarters, you come to the front of the main building, which is a square of one story and raised about 3 feet above 342 the ground. All the buildings are roofed with bamboos, and [824] thatched with rice-straw. Considering that there is an open square hall in the centre of the house, called nadumane there remain the four sides only for habitable quarters. The front side however is reserved for an open verandah—the reception hall. Near to the right end the principal door leads to the inner rooms, which are all dark, opening only by a small door into the inner square, which is lit by the sky-light formed